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Baker-Polito Administration Announces Digital Learning Conference This Fall

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BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration announced today plans to hold a Digital Learning and Innovation Conference this fall in an effort to generate awareness and demand among Massachusetts colleges and employers for career-oriented online, competency-based education opportunities. The announcement was made by Governor Charlie Baker and Secretary of Education Jim Peyser during a visit to Match Beyond, a Boston nonprofit organization that provides recent high school graduates, and underemployed adults, with access to competency-based online college education, supported by one-on-one tutoring, career coaching, and job placement services.

"Our administration is committed to strengthening our workforce, growing our nation-leading economy, and equipping our residents with the skills they need to connect with career pathways," **said Governor Baker**. "Digital Learning programs like Match Beyond have the ability to make the unemployed and underemployed more competitive and we look forward to discussing future opportunities with students, teachers, businesses, and universities later this year."

"We are committed to making investments in our workforce across the Commonwealth, through important programs like grants for STEM students, new vocational equipment, or digital learning services," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. "We look forward to engaging with all stakeholders at the upcoming conference to create even more digital learning opportunities."

This one-day, Massachusetts-focused conference will follow an international Online Learning Summit at MIT, scheduled for September.

Additional details about the Governor's conference, which will be cohosted by MIT, will be available later this summer.

"Match Beyond is showing promising results in increasing access and affordability for young adults seeking to gain skills and degrees in order to re-enter or move up in the workforce," **said Secretary of Education James Peyser**. "I believe this is a model that can be replicated and I look forward to learning about other approaches at the Governor's Conference this fall."

"We're excited that Governor Baker is putting a spotlight on the growing number of innovative, higher education opportunities for adult learners in the Commonwealth," **said Mike Larsson, president and founder of Match Beyond**. "At Match Beyond, we've seen first-hand how adult learners can earn advanced degrees - and leverage their skills and experience - when given the right mix of opportunity, flexibility and support."

Match Beyond, founded in 2013, partners with Southern New Hampshire University's College for America to offer students college courses online.

"Massachusetts has a long history as an education leader and innovator, so it's no surprise that some of the most groundbreaking work to expand digital learning opportunities is happening here," **said Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner of Higher Education**. "As we work to reshape the college experience and expand outreach to underserved students, it will be essential for us to keep the focus not only on access and affordability, but also on the completion of credits, degrees and certificates that will allow students to move into good jobs to support themselves and their families."

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